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Letter, Virginia Brainard to Dudley and Merl Brainard [December 9, 1942]

Virginia Brainard

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December 9,

Dear Mother and Daddy,

I wasn't responsible for the last page of my letter to you last Sunday. Some of my fellow journalists started to heckle me and they wrote the last ~~xxxxx~~ page. Before I knew what was going on, it was all sealed and stamped so I just mailed it anyway. And all that was going on Sunday night in the midst of ~~the~~ the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ excitement and fear over the war news.

I was over in the Grill in the Union Sunday evening and newsboys were selling extras all over the building. The fellows would come in and say to one another, "Well, are you all ready to go to war?" I had a Chem. lab. exam facing me the next day and I couldn't study for it. I could not get my attention fixed on it. There wasn't anyplace I could go in the dorm and get away from the radio. Both radios were going full blast down in the parlor nearly all night. So I didn't study and I got nearly 100 on the test.

There have been two reactions among the ~~girls~~ girls. One is to get married immediately, and the other is to go home immediately where they'll be "safe." They seem to think Iowa State may be a bombing objective because of its importance in national defense. That may be but certainly not for a long time.

Both reactions are silly, any way I look at it. The most important thing for us to do is to stay here and get out training as soon as possible. That is the best possible way we can serve our country. There'll be a great need for home economists in the near future. We'll all have to pull our ~~xx~~ own weight. I believe I wrote you Sunday about the need for home ec. journalists.

Our world has been turned upside down and when we emerge from this conflict, it will be a greatly different world from the one even we have known. But someday the war will be over. We'll live through the conflict somehow and life will go on after the war is over. We aren't individuals any longer; we are citizens of the United States and our country is at war. Right or wrong, it's up to us to see it through. ~~xxx~~ We must put our dreams and hopes away for quite a long while. But at the end of that time we must be able to salvage them and build ~~xxxx~~ the kind of life we want to live in a new world. And through the coming conflict we must remember that life will go on in spite of death and hardship and suffering and we must keep our heads.

It is very difficult to settle down and study for finals. Everything I do seems so futile. But

~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

that, again, is the wrong attitude. We must work even harder than we have ever worked before.

I checked out of Chem. lab. early to hear the president ast for a declaration of war against Japan. I shall never forget that day and there are few who will. But I believe that when it was over, everyone felt some sort of a relief. The agony of impending doom hanging over our heads and the procrastination and the series of crises and wars of nerves are over and our task is very clear. We know what we must do.

I don't need all that money, but it would be very nice. However, I do need \$10 to finish up payments on my board bill. I had to use some of that money to eat during vacation and they want us to pay our board right up to the colsing date. I believe the last check you sent me fell short ~~xxxxxxx~~ just a little bit short of that. Board for next quarter has also gone up.

I wonder what Robyn will do. I wonder if she even knows whether or not her fellow is alive. I wrote Marlow this afternoon. I hope he's all right ~~xxxxin~~ for a short while, at least. News came over this afternoon that a squadron of planes had been sighting an hour and a half ~~xxxx~~ from New York. And they expect raids on the west coast any day, any minute. It all seems so unbelievable. We've been reading about ~~xxxxx~~ the war in easy chairs, near warm fires---oh, sure, we knew war would come to us ~~xxxxxx~~ sometime---but I don't think any of us actually believed it. We were too busy with our own little ~~w~~ lives. But now it's here. Somehow, we young people, anyway, don't really believe tragedy can happen to us until it does.

You'll get a copy of the war issue of the Daily Student and that will tell you all the rest of how the war will affect the college. I must close now and get to work on the night staff of Wed. a.m. Student.

P.S. Please send me a
list of what you
people want for
Christmas!

Love,
Virginia